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## The Relation of Rhythmic Activity to Music in the Education of the Future.

By EARL BARNES.

(Editor's Note: There are printed below passages from the significant address by Professor Earl Barnes which he delivered at our Conference in Pittsburgh. He aroused so much interest at the afternoon meeting that he was asked to continue the subject at the round table discussion which followed the banquet in the evening. Here only the necessity of carrying out programmed events was able to stop the lively discussion which this able speaker called forth. The full text of Professor Barnes' address is printed in the volume of our proceedings which may be obtained according to the information given in the editorial comments on pages two and three—P. W. D.)

Now let us consider the failure of music to function in the daily life of the children. Students who have approached music psychologically have nearly always been driven back to consider its physiological basis in rhythm, and it is this position which I shall take. The place of rhythm in cosmic philosophy had been many times expounded. (See Herbert Spencer in "First Principles"). Probably all energy is rhythmic and cadenced. Everywhere is motion and probably this motion is never continuous. The music of the spheres is no idle phrase for the continuity of the movement of each of the heavenly bodies is regularly broken as it approaches or recedes from other attractive bodies. This rhythmic movement of the earth gives us the regular sequence of the seasons, which gives us the rhythm of vegetation and, combined with the regular return of night and day, it largely regulates animal habits.

Within the body we have not only the rhythmic rise and fall of cellular conditions due to the tire of work and play, to eating and the like, but

also the varied rhythms of breathing, circulation, digestion and assimilation. The muscular system naturally responds to rhythmic sequences and in untrained children the appearance of these can be observed as they come successively into function.

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If, then, we can train children in the correct harmonies of music we shall prepare their bodies and minds to respond sympathetically to the rhythms of the objective and the subjective worlds about them. Conversely if we can train their bodies and minds to respond to universal principles of rhythm, we shall prepare them to appreciate, to execute and to create music.

\* \* \* \*

Here and there leaders are pointing the way to a new synthesis of rhythmic activities. In 1892, Emil Jacques Dalcroze, professor of harmony at Geneva Conservatory, began working out a system of physical activities corresponding with and interpretative of musical harmony. In 1910, he established himself in a Greek temple at Helleran, a garden-

suburb of Dresden, where he began training groups of students, some of whom are now teaching in England and America. Dalcroze's study of children led him to begin with movements of the head and arms, to which he then added the feet and legs. Music, he held, should be begun by a careful teaching of physical movements in close relation to the time and rhythm of the movements employed. He had found that his musical students had little sense of rhythm; they could not play with feeling and they could not improvise. Hence he determined to establish a correlation between the mind, the nerve paths, and the muscles. Students must learn to live music if they would appreciate or produce it. Out of these ideas has grown a carefully arranged series of exercises in which the student beats the time with the hands, sometimes carrying a different time with each hand and at the same time expressing note duration by the forward movement of the feet and the body. On general pedagogical grounds, there seems danger of neglecting the general rhythmic sensibility of the whole body, working as a unit, and of over intellectualizing what must after all remain an appeal to the racial soul.\*

In the kindergarten, we have worked out a series of very simple rhythmic activities accompanied with music which is often said to fail in applying the most universal musical principles and which on the physical side gives us too formal reproductions of industrial and dramatic activities. At the same time the kindergarten has done an invaluable service in breaking up the formalism

of education and in bringing music and activity together in vital relations in children's lives.

Miss Alys Bentley, of the Ethical Culture School in New York, is now doing some very remarkable work with young children in the schools, with classes in various parts of the country, and at her summer camp in the Adirondacks, in developing eurhythmic exercises. Beginning with the large muscle masses and guided by carefully selected music the child is led to a series of correlated movements, some of them based on the activities of the animal world. Working from the spinal column as the center, the children acquire a freedom of movement and the power of expression through correlated series that extend to every part of the organism. Through this perfected rhythmical body, the student is then led on to express the feeling awakened in him by various musical compositions. This preserves the individual variant and it should prevent excessive intellectualism.

Isadore Duncan, and other representatives of the art of dancing, are increasingly seeking to make the music and the physical expression mutually complementary and interpretative. Out of all these experiments, with the new freedom that has come to us and the present widespread enthusiasm for democratic expression in the arts, with the multiplied means of cheap gratification that are bringing the arts within reach of everyone, there must in time merge a new synthesis of the arts in which music will find the leadership which is its due and the setting and interpretation which only this larger synthesis can give.

Music in the public schools has

\* "The Eurythmics of Jacques-Dalcroze", London, Costable & Co., 1912.

too long been a fad, a negligible detail in the curriculum, something to be taken up at odd times, for which many children might be excused, a training for a few prospective musicians. The teacher of music in the public schools has lived too much apart for the larger school interests. Sometimes merely tolerated except on occasion of anniversaries, exhibitions or teachers' institutes, when she exhibited choruses, sang solos or excited the jealousy of the regular grade teachers.

If the position taken in this paper is correct, then the teacher of music should be a central figure in the life of the public school. Her work should be closely correlated with all the physical activities of the school for the earliest ages. Her training should lead to life more abundantly for every child in self realization, in literature, art and social functioning. She is no more in the school to produce musicians than the teacher of arithmetic is there to produce mathematicians or the teacher of literature is there to produce poets.

And for the public school her influence must go out into the community to bring joy and beauty to the communal life. She must lead the people to use their new found liberty in the arts and these new inventions in moving pictures and mechanically produced music. She must regulate and standardize dancing. In a word, she must give to the oncoming generation such a harmonious development of the whole nervous system that they will respond only to the good, the true and the beautiful.

I am to speak to you today as an educational psychologist, and not

as a musician. I am to deal with diagnosis and general educational conditions. You are experts; and the making of prescriptions is in your hands. I am like the father bringing his children to the physician and lingering to explain their heredity and the general family conditions under which they live.

From this general point of view, then, I find your part of the school curriculum, which seems to me one of the most important and intrinsically interesting parts, strangely out of favor with both teachers and pupils. In a study made by Superintendent Kratz, of Sioux City, on "Pupils Preferences", based on an examination of 91 teachers and 2,181 pupils, he found that 11% of his teachers disliked music more than any other subject they taught while not one liked it best. Of the boys, 14% disliked it most, while only 3% chose it; and of the girls, 4% disliked it most and 7% liked it best. This gives 18% of the children registering their dislikes while only 10% chose music as their favorite study. ("Study of Pupils' Preferences," by H. E. Kratz, North Western Monthly, September, 1897.)

In my own study on 2,350 children in Johnstown, Pa., I found only 1% of the boys and 2% of the girls choosing music as their favorite subject while 5% of the boys and 1% of the girls disliked it most of any subject they studied. ("The Child's Favorite Subject," by Earl Barnes, Proceedings of the National Education Association, 1903.) In a comparable study of 7,874 children in Hartford, Conn., music was chosen as a favorite subject by 3% of the boys and 8% of the girls; but it was most disliked by 15% of the boys

and 6% of the girls. Of 226 Hartford teachers 1.4% liked best to teach music but 9.3% found it the most disagreeable subject they taught. In this last study the dislike of the children tends to vanish with advancing years; but the number liking the subject does not materially increase.

Of course, there are very striking exceptions to these results in individual schools and in communities where musical leadership has been able to interest and hold the children and the people. But in these three studies, representing widely different communities, the results are essentially the same and they drive us to conclude that there is something about the teaching of music in the public schools in general that is unfortunate. The best results of education come only when the person being educated is attracted to the subject and desires to learn it; and there is certainly music of some sort that appeals to all ages and all degrees of development.

There are two possible explanations that suggest themselves if this diagnosis is accepted as correct. Possibly we are trying to teach music that does not fit the development of those we are teaching; and again, possibly we are teaching it in a way that does not function in the lives of the children and so fails to command their allegiance.

In discussing the kind of music that should be taught I speak with small knowledge and only from the point of view of cultural content. The musical form is a technical matter on which you alone are competent to speak. In a study on the favorite songs of 2,000 children, in Boston and Springfield, Miss Gates

found that she could divide them as follows. Home songs, including lullabies and baby songs, were chosen by 14.5% of the girls and 7% of the boys. They appeal mainly to the earlier ages, 22% of the girls and 12% of the boys choosing them at the age of seven. "Home Sweet Home" remained a favorite with all ages.

School songs, as was natural in a school test were chosen by 43% of both boys and girls at seven but died out with advancing years until they were chosen by only 2% of the girls and 5% of the boys at the age of sixteen. These were largely nature songs such as "Spring," "Robin Come" and "The Violet." Such songs, largely made up for school purposes, seemed to lose their appeal after the age of ten.

Religious songs, as we should expect, appeal little to children at seven, being chosen by only 2% of the girls and 6% of the boys. By the age of thirteen, however, 23% of the girls chose these songs; and at sixteen years, 27% of the girls and 21% of the boys chose them. Religious songs gather around early adolescence and the birth of spiritual longing.

Patriotic and war songs are chosen by 13% of the girls and 18% of the boys even at the age of seven. The choice of these songs increases steadily and 20% of the girls and 35% of the boys of all ages choose them. "America" leads but "The Star Spangled Banner," "Marching Through Georgia," and "Yankee Doodle" have many lovers. It is not alone the subject which draws the children to these songs but the martial air is full of rhythm and makes

a primitive appeal which I am to discuss later.

Street songs were chosen by 7% of the girls and 10% of the boys. "My Gal's A Highborn Lady" and "Rosie O'Grady" are types and they appeal most strongly at the ages of fourteen and fifteen.

The reasons for these choices are indefinite, but they have a certain cumulative value. "Like the Music" is given by 20% of the girls and 15.9% of boys. "Nice, pretty or sweet" by 18.8% of both. Patriotic feeling, which is closely akin to the

last, is given by 18.4% of boys and 10% of girls. "Like the music or melody" begins with 6% of the girls at seven and mounts to 29% at sixteen; with the boys it increases from 10% at seven years to 20% at sixteen. "Like the words" is given by 11% of the girls and 4.6% of the boys. The reason for the choices given is obviously a mixed feeling of pleasure rather than any intellectual appeal of the words and this is as it should be. ("The Musical Interests of Children," by Fanny B. Gates, *Journal of Pedagogy*, 1898.)

## Getting Ready in Nebraska

*Some Preliminary Notes Regarding the Next Conference at Lincoln.*

By Chas. H. Miller, Lincoln, Neb.

Mr. Earhart has outlined a program in blank, and I filled in the events to be given by us here at Lincoln. But as there may be changes in it and as the speakers are not yet outlined, it is not wise to say anything about the program, but I will give you a short account of the music section meeting of the State Association.

"A whole day was spent by the music supervisors of Nebraska at their annual state meeting, Nov. 5. A strong program was heard by about 700 people. Of course less than 100 of these were music teachers but it shows a remarkable interest in the subject to have one-sixth of the entire number of teachers listen so long to discussions in music. At the close of the meeting the supervisors unanimously agreed to do all in their power to enroll everybody who is interested in music for the National Convention next March in Lincoln. Some of the

cities had already agreed to attend the convention of music supervisors next spring. It was voted to issue a call to the private music teachers of the state to meet at the same time and organize a State Music Teachers' Association. Many enrolled and paid the membership fee for next March. Already reports have come in that many teachers from the Pacific coast are planning to come. Some have already made hotel reservations from Kansas, Iowa, New Jersey and Boston. The Lincoln hotel will be headquarters where a fine large banquet hall will be an ideal place for a meeting of 600 people. Every supervisor who wants to boost for the national meeting should send his registration fee at once to James E. McIlroy, 3001 Cliff St., McKeesport, Pa. A large advance registration will influence many people to go who otherwise would not attend. Let us make this next meeting one long to be remembered.